

“Amaryllis, A Good Choice for Coastal Bulb Gardens”

The Amaryllis are flowering and putting on quite a show, as they do at this time every year. This is one of the best adapted bulbs for the northern Gulf Coast.

There are two different plant species known as amaryllis. The hardy amaryllis, *Lycoris squamigera* is usually grown in more northern locations. The plants that we enjoy most are hybrids of *Hippeastrum*.

The *Hippeastrum* varieties bloom on thick, one foot tall flower stalks. There is a wide range of colors, including white, pink, red and orange. Varieties are also available that have bi-colored flowers -usually red or pink stripes on a white background.

Amaryllis is normally started in the garden by planting large bulbs. They can be grown in the ground or in pots. The ideal time to plant them is in September. If planted in beds, prepare the soil by mixing in large quantities of organic amendments and set bulbs only deep enough that the tip of each bulb is even with the top of the ground. When planting in containers, pot so that half of the bulb is above the potting mix.

Amaryllis are tropical plants, originating in South America. The growth and amount of flowering is therefore regulated by bulb size, temperature and moisture. Two to six flowers are produced per stalk, and big, healthy bulbs sometimes have two flower stalks.

Fertilize once or twice after flowering in order to encourage vegetative growth and associated bulb enlargement. Bulbs can be left in the ground or lifted and separated in the fall.

Some amaryllis growers enjoy trying their hand at breeding them and growing plants from seed that results from the crosses. This can be a rewarding hobby, but requires some patience. It takes about 3 years to produce a bulb from seed that is large enough to flower.

Other Amaryllis Info:

📦 Adapted to hardiness zone 8 to 11. The northern Gulf Coast region is in zone 8.

📦 Soil preference: Alkaline, but tolerates acid. Wide range of soil textures is acceptable, as long as they are well drained.

- 📖 Salt tolerance: Moderate, can tolerate some salt spray.
 - 📖 Landscape uses: Mass plantings, ground cover, container plant, border and in naturalistic designs.
 - 📖 Plant characteristics: Coarse semi-evergreen or evergreen foliage.
- There is
no notable fall color or fragrance.

Question of the Week: Frost evidently damaged my early planted vegetables. Some of the leaves have died. Should I replant?

Answer: In most cases the plants will probably recover by sprouting new growth below the damaged areas. Wait another 7 to 10 days and evaluate. If new leaves have begun to emerge the plants should recover. If not, plan to replant.